5: Crowder J-5 (1955-1961) 1962
MS37 Senegal MS37

equal status to all Senegalese and wanted to make everyone true Senegalese citizens whether they were griots, leather-workers or jewellers. Afterwards the non-griots agreed that the griots who had just died should be buried 'in the same way as anyone else, and as a beginning they agreed to let the burial of the victim of the incident take place, not in the traditional baobab but in Diack earth.'

In the Government today there are, amongst those members belonging to tribes with a class system only two of inferior caste, one being a 'bijoutier' and one a griot. It is said of another that he is of slave origin, but this is not certain because politicians often try to attribute inferior caste to their opponents. In the Assembly, of the members with caste all are noble or freeborn with the exception of one 'bijoutier', and one griot. It is thus at present difficult to get on in politics unless one is noble or freeborn. Indeed chiefly connexion is important, even though chiefs are no longer of significance administratively. Thus in 1957 Kenneth Robinson wrote:

> Membership of chiefly families is, nevertheless, an important source not only of prestige but of political interest. In many interviews with political leaders in the smaller townships and villages they almost invariably defined their own position, and that of their fellows, in part by reference to their relationship with the ruling families, or with the indigenous caste system.

Mr. William Foltz, who is making a detailed survey of Senegalese politics, has however observed that the local party groups in the country are increasingly representative of the inferior castes and many of the important backroom boys are of inferior caste, which suggests that there may be a change from the present situation at the next elections. But so far, as Mercier has observed, it does not look as though high standing in the modern context can yet completely redeem traditional inferiority.

The caste system in Senegal is one of the most delicate problems confronting the Senegalese Government today.

6: Mercier E-5 (no date) 1956 MS37 Senegal MS37

[571] [178] preserve much of their prestige;[1] they are sometimes in diametrical opposition to the modernist elites and sometimes try to come to terms with them; occasionally, as the result of historical conditions, the two elites are closely interlocked.[2]

4. Types and degree of tension between the African modernist elites and the European groups. The latter occupy the position of ruling class in the whole community represented by each territorial unit. The conflict is fundamental, yet a balance, however temporary and precarious, between the two groups may sometimes be discerned, though it varies enormously in degree from one region to another and at different times.[3]

The situation in Senegal, compared with that in other parts of French West Africa, exhibits certain special features. Senegal was the first of these territories to be colonized.[4] At the beginning of the new phase which opened after the war, it had the largest number of educated and partly Westernized persons, and it has for several decades had a political life modelled on the West, though of a summary and limited character.[5] At this level of political life, the course of events during the past 10 years affords us a first glimpse of regional divergencies. [668] It is a significant fact that Senegal was not the first French West African territory in which a movement making political demands of some magnitude arose. The acute crises of the immediate post-war period developed elsewhere—in the Ivory Coast—with the founding and expansion of the [665] Rassemblement Démocratique Africain, the first political party in French Africa (Black) with nationalistic tendencies. The Rassemblement Démocratique Africain never succeeded in establishing itself firmly in Senegal, either before or after its change of policy in the 1950's.[6] There is no space here to describe in detail the historical and social background of such events, though I shall have to refer to it several times later in this paper. Some of the basic traits will suffice for mention: aspects of the traditional structures, of contemporary economic development, of the schools' endeavour to promote assimilation.

[563] The principal racial groups inhabiting Senegal,[7] whatever their cultural differences, and whatever their traditional hostility to one another (which has still by no means completely disappeared) all had the same type of social and political organization. They were strictly graded societies divided into endogamous castes, each with its special economic, political, ritual and other functions. In the present context, inter-caste antagonisms and incompatibilities are as a rule more important than racial antagonisms, since several racial groups may have equivalent social gradings or one may have borrowed and adapted another's gradings. This is a fundamental feature; it indicates the framework within which we can explain the problem of relations between [554] the traditional and the modernist elites. For instance, prestige due to education may be superimposed on prestige based on tradition, in particular prestige due to caste; or else the two may be completely separate.[8] Even today a high

1. Either officially or more or less 'clandestinely'.
2. E.g. in South Dahomey.
3. In the Ivory Coast, for example, a period of calm and co-operation followed when the Rassemblement Démocratique Africain dropped certain extreme claims.
[175] 4. Trade counters have existed for more than three centuries and the more specifically colonial period began more than a hundred years ago.
5. It had four municipalities with full privileges which sent a deputy to the French Parliament.
6. It broke off its alliance with the French Communist party.
7. The Ouolof, the Toucouleur and the Serere.
[179] 8. The resistance of the traditional ruling strata to foreign influence explains why, in certain cases, the lower castes were the first to go to school.

6:Mercier E-5 (no date) 1956 MS37 Senegal MS37

standing in the modern context does not often completely redeem a traditional inferiority. The latter obviously does not prevent accession to such rank, but it does prevent a man from reaping the full benefit of the prestige which it confers. We shall have to revert to the ambiguity which thus characterizes individual situations, because it is an important aspect of the problem of the modernist elites. The old political organizations have either been destroyed or considerably weakened, though the prestige of the aristocratic families who hold the chefferies or are closely connected with them has not completely disappeared. But an important change has occurred: the power and influence of the traditional political chiefs has to a large extent been transferred to the khalifas of the great Islamic sects;[1] the latter represent today the principal force capable of resisting the modernist elite, and the one with which the latter and the political movements identified with it must to some extent come to terms.[2]

The changes due to the new economic conditions resulting from the colonial period can be discerned at several levels. The rural economy has been radically transformed—progressive abandonment of subsistence farming in favour of a single cash crop throughout a large part of the territory.[3] In contrast with regions where a plantation economy has developed, the average farmer's income has remained extremely low. Consequently, what has elsewhere been termed a 'rural bourgeoisie' has not emerged, and the most favoured economic categories coincide, by and large, with the upper strata of the traditional or semi-traditional type (heads of sects),[4] or with those artificially created on the same model by the colonial administration. Again, the group to which the name 'commercial bourgeoisie' has been given is still too small to have much influence;[5] almost all African traders are small shopkeepers and make no appreciable impact on the affairs of the community as a whole. The most significant changes are found at another level: urbanization and industrialization. Senegal is the most highly urbanized territory of French West Africa; about a quarter of the population live in the big towns and the administrative and trading centres. A very large wage-earning class with a steadily growing nucleus of stable labour has developed.[6] A workers' elite has appeared, and intensive trade union activity in the big towns has brought this class into touch with the educated elite (the administrative bourgeoisie, etc.).

This educated elite deserves special attention; in Senegal more than elsewhere, it represents the dominant element among the modernist elites. The educational policy was definitely conceived and organized at the beginning of the colonial period in the context of a policy and a ideology of assimilation. The educational curriculum introduced in the French establishments in Senegal at the beginning of the nineteenth century was essentially foreign to the tradition and culture of the autochthonous societies. Thus, in a recent paper, the author made much of the point that 'it was not a factor making for integration of the individual in his group, but rather—at any rate in the first historical phase—one making for a break. The adaptation of the curriculum and even of teaching methods

1. Their functions are hereditary.
2. Cf. below, remarks on the political parties of the traditional type.
3. In this case, groundnuts.
4. The economic role of the Mouride brotherhood is particularly important: colonization of new lands, experiments in mechanization, etc.
5. The middle-man trade is practically monopolized by the Lebanese colony; in the town of Dakar alone there are more than 3,000 Lebanese.
6. The region of Dakar alone has more than 30,000 wage earners in the private sector.

6:Mercier E-5 (no date) 1956 MS37 Senegal MS37

to the African social environment was scarcely taken into consideration. The fact that the African languages were, and still are, totally excluded, even in the lowest school classes, brings out this tendency quite clearly, whatever the justification that may have been offered on practical grounds. The original policy has of course been relaxed in certain points; the principle of adjusting the French educational system to local conditions has been accepted—the adaptations being concerned however more with the physical than with the social and human framework. But the basic tendency remains.'

However, the schools could reach—and still reach—only a fraction of the population. And so the training of an 'elite' came soon to be regarded as a necessary first stage in the process of assimilation. The two ideas emerge closely intertwined in Faidherbe's famous declaration of 1860: 'Everyone can reach the same goal when he satisfies the conditions required of all of you alike, conditions which we are today putting within your reach. You see young men from the Christian families of Saint-Louis, who after a good start in the mission schools, go and continue their studies in a secondary school in France, come back fit for filling the highest positions in the colony. That road is open to you all alike. We are ready to facilitate access to the liberal professions for every child who shows exceptional talent at school. . . .' As a matter of fact, those, as yet few in number, who at the start of the colonial period received instruction on Western lines were supposed to be the answer to immediate, limited needs. The main object was to train interpreters, lower grade civil servants, clerks, etc., as the indispensable auxiliaries in the establishment of a colonial administrative and commercial system. Their role was a humble one, but they shared in the prestige of the European group and also, to some extent, in its privileged economic position. The notion of an elite rapidly acquired a wider and hazier signification; it came to cover all those who were thought to serve as a link between the colonizers, the bearers of civilization, and the untaught masses who were destined gradually to acquire it. In fact, the eager adoption of European values, and the acceptance of assimilationist policies characteristic of the period up to the last war, accentuated the trend towards a rift between the indigenous elite and the masses who still adhered to their traditional cultural and social systems.[1] A point deserving emphasis is the considerable attraction exerted by the centres of assimilation, notably the 'four communes',[2] the natives of which very soon received French citizenship, and in which education developed much more rapidly than elsewhere.[3] These events in the recent history of Senegal explain why prestige in modern times was focused on the 'intellectual' elite,[4] and why the latter made a considerable impact on that colony sooner than they did on the other French West African territories.

Intensive investigations have been made in the principal urban centres of Senegal[5] to ascertain the aspirations of the various population classes and the models they adopt. They cover adults as well as children. More summary samplings taken in rural surroundings show that there is less difference in this matter between the city and the country than might have been supposed.

1. Firm links subsisted, however, as will be seen later on.
2. Dakar, Gorée, Saint-Louis, Rufisque.
3. Multiplication of primary schools, introduction of secondary education, etc.
4. Taken in a very broad sense; for a long time, the mass type of this new intellectual elite was the *serêñ* (the holder of the primary school certificate).
5. By the sociology section of the Institut Français d'Afrique Noire.

6:Mercier E-5 (no date) 1956 MS37 Senegal MS37

This is a significant fact; high prestige, more or less definitely acknowledged by the whole population, crystallizes around professions, functions or situations which are considered to be 'intellectual'—implying in fact a minimum of Western-type learning. Prestige on economic grounds seems to be definitely on the decline.[1] At Dakar, Thiès and Saint-Louis du Sénégal, adults were questioned about the trade or occupation they would like their children to take up. A vast majority of the socio-vocational categories (unskilled and skilled workers, traders, clerks, civil servants, etc.) from which the population sample under study was taken gave the same answer. Between 65 and 80 per cent mentioned an intellectual profession. Those most frequently cited were teaching (primary or secondary school teacher) and the liberal professions (lawyer, doctor, etc.); the technological professions (engineer etc.) were much more rarely specified.[2] One of the commonest answers was that vague but highly significant term, 'civil servant'. The fact is that the trend of education in the period before 1945 helped to establish a very close link between education and a job in the administration; this is still the case, despite the changes effected in the last few years. Similar attitudes are found in the results of surveys among children in the primary schools at Dakar. Among those who replied specifically[3]—about three-quarters of the children questioned—more than 80 per cent expressed a preference for an occupation considered to be intellectual, irrespective of their father's occupation; next came certain manual trades, with commerce far behind. The choice of an unspecified administrative job was less frequent than among the adults. It follows that the view generally taken about education—including primary education—viz. that it will lead almost inevitably to an intellectual occupation,[4] however modest, remains very stable; but it is less and less in keeping with the realities of the situation.

A brief study of the facts in the development of the educational system will allow us to make a first evaluation of the system. The crude school rate rose rapidly from 1946 to 1953 and has since continued to rise pretty regularly (16 per cent in 1953, 18 per cent in 1954, about 20 per cent in 1955). Senegal's early advance in this respect explains why the increase is less steep there than in most of the other French West African territories.[5] True, the school rate is still relatively low (and a fairly large proportion of the children do not complete even the primary course and will probably soon lose such learning as they have acquired), but a plateau was reached several years ago: primary education turns out many more pupils than the 'administrative bourgeoisie'—characteristic of the colonial period—or its equivalent in private enterprise can absorb. Formerly, the surplus of the educated population could be absorbed by the manual trades or by migration to other territories. But this second door is gradually closing now that these other territories are catching up in education. Moreover, the slow pace of economic expansion precludes any big increase in the number of openings for technical workers or in the supervisory grades in industry.[6] This is the justification for the talk about the educational over-

1. Material security (e.g. that enjoyed by civil servants) seems to be desired more often than actual wealth.
2. They are only beginning to acquire some prestige; the number of students choosing this branch has risen considerably in recent years.
3. Children from 10 to 14, in the 'intermediate' classes.
4. A job in the bureaucracy was for years the standard aim.
5. The school rate in the Ivory Coast almost trebled between 1946 and 1953.
6. Limited, but chronic unemployment, already exists in Dakar.

6:Mercier E-5 (no date) 1956 MS37 Senegal MS37

the individuals questioned; and these differences are likely to become sharper—45 per cent were farmers' sons, but considerable variations appeared according to the socio-vocational category. The proportion of unskilled workers was 80 per cent; it was only 42 per cent for skilled workers and craftsmen; still lower (33 per cent) for civil servants and subordinate office employees (the widest category of the 'administrative bourgeoisie' characteristic of the colonial period), 28 per cent for senior clerks and civil servants;[1] for members of the liberal professions in the widest sense[2] it was no more than 21 per cent. These last three categories taken as a whole represent the 'intellectual professions', according to the meaning still ascribed by the great majority of Senegalese to that phrase. Of those who had a father already in one of these professions, three-quarters were engaged in the same work. The same process of stabilization can, however, be observed, though less clearly, among specialized workers; of those whose father was a worker, nearly two-thirds still belonged to the same class; most of the others had been absorbed into the 'administrative bourgeoisie'. These, moreover, are the two chief categories,[3] from which there has emerged a new type of elite which really began to grow in size only after the last war.

Important changes in outlook, not only in Senegal, but in the whole of French West Africa, have accompanied this most recent historical phase. From the elite of the strictly colonial type as defined above there has begun to emerge—and even to take on separate existence—a new intellectual elite, still a relatively small group.[4] This elite, which might be termed that of the liberal professions—this time in the strict sense of the phrase—having a distinctly higher level of education and more definite professional competence, is able to lay claim to a quantity of posts until now almost exclusively held by Europeans. The category was not completely non-existent during the pre-war period; it developed earlier in Senegal than in the other French West African territories as a result of Senegal's possession of an embryonic system of secondary education.[5] Being numerically weak, this elite had an opportunity of associating, to a certain extent, with the European population, a fact which manifestly lessened its prospects of playing an active role and assuming the leadership of the African masses. Furthermore, it continued to follow the policy of assimilation and was the only element in the 'colonial elite' which succeeded in achieving it. It could find only a limited field of action in the political life of the 'four communes'. It consisted mainly of lawyers, a few members of the teaching profession and doctors and even a few administrators. It doubtless set an example for a colonial elite of a far inferior grade from which it was not entirely cut off; it showed them the road to be taken by the seeker after modern knowledge. Prestige of the kind hitherto enjoyed only by Europeans was transferred to them and was thus seen to be no longer out of reach and so engendered ideas of power—a share, even if limited, of political and administrative powers—and wealth, or material security, at the lowest. This role continued to develop after the war, though with a rather abrupt change of direction.

1. I.e. those holding posts of responsibility, regardless of their educational level.
2. Mainly, teaching, medicine, etc.
3. The first, especially.
4. Only a few hundred individuals, including members of the 'colonial elite' who were belatedly given fresh opportunities for completing their studies and reaching a higher status.
5. *Lycées* at Saint-Louis, later at Dakar.

6:Mercier E-5 (no date) 1956 MS37 Senegal MS37

cent of the population. Thus, the number of Europeans in intermediate or subordinate posts has substantially increased and the range of competitive situations, instead of growing less is being regularly extended. This affects not only the new elite, but a large segment of the old 'administrative bourgeoisie', and even, to some extent, the workers and lower supervisory grades in industry. And so, while—in theory—opportunities for reaching the highest ranks and simultaneously entering the European group (a consequence foreseen by assimilationist ideology) have increased with the development of education, in reality a radical change in the whole social structure has multiplied the causes of conflict. New factors have cropped up abruptly: further assimilation is gainsaid, Europeans and Africans become more and more sensitive to the realities of race, etc. Obviously, the political consequences of such conflicts are considerable.

I have mentioned cases in which a rift occurred between the elites and the masses, in the early years, at any rate, of the 'colonial elite'. This fact needs some further explanation, while the question of the relations between the 'educated' and the 'traditional' categories calls for re-examination on a wider basis. The stereotyped patterns maintained by the European administration underline the points of divergence. The administration has besides had a tendency—and not only in Senegal—to underestimate the influence of modernist elites and to depreciate their impact upon the population as a whole. True, important tensions can be observed, and some antagonism developed between the citizens (those of the 'four communes'), from whom the major part of the 'colonial elite' came, and the subjects in the other parts of the territory; but such tensions virtually disappeared with the legal changes introduced immediately after the war, a fact which is proof enough how superficial the points of divergence were. The 'educated' classes, moreover, sought to reap all possible profit from the power they acquired in their administrative functions, or in their role of intermediary between producers and the big commercial companies; and that attitude naturally set up a great many local conflicts. Sometimes they sought compensation for their inferior standing in the traditional framework by asserting themselves in the exercise of their new functions. As we have already shown, however, the population as a whole recognized the prestige of the new intellectual elite. True, their prestige did not necessarily displace the traditional prestige, but the two can coexist, a circumstance which stands out most clearly in rural districts. So, even if the 'educated' African has difficulty in fitting into the traditional system or even the family group, even if he is often a maladjusted element, he is rarely the fish out of water whom so many colonial observers considered him. All the elements of the population are still continually in touch.[1] There are two basic reasons for this. First, the range of family relationships is still a very wide one and they themselves are still effective; they maintain their hold on the 'educated' African even when he has left his birthplace. Secondly, religion—chiefly Islam in Senegal—and above all, membership of a sect, which is practically hereditary, continue to be important. The fact that tension between elites and masses led to nothing but quite limited and temporary breaks explains why the recent and entirely conscious effort to retie loose bonds was carried through with comparative ease. It was the new elite that, with political aims in view, inspired this effort. Usually too far removed from the

1. The vitality of racial or regional associations is significant in this respect.

7:Crowder J-5 (1955-1958) 1959
MS37 Senegal MS37

Metropolis. Until recently the African élite has always come from St. Louis. It is a sort of spiritual centre of Black Africa. It had the first school—Lycée Faidherbe. And in 1866 it was given the first Hotel de Ville of the French Union. It is the cradle of the French Union. It would be a tragedy if it died.'

To such men as these it seems scandalous that St. Louis with its great history and traditions should give way to a parvenue like Dakar. Of all West African cities St. Louis is the one with the most illustrious and fascinating history. It was called St. Louis after the great French King, Louis XIII, in the middle of the seventeenth century. However, in the following century it began to expand into a town whose inhabitants were a distinct race, comparable to the Creoles of Sierra Leone. White and black intermarried to form a group known as the St. Louisians. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries these were the great families of the Senegal, though today they are losing importance. Names like Carpot, Descanet, Deves, Guillabert and Crespin are still remembered with respect in St. Louis.

By the end of the eighteenth century the town had more than 7,000 inhabitants and in 1778 a mayor, who had to be chosen from the local population, was charged with the maintenance of good relations between the people and the Governor. In 1833 all inhabitants of St. Louis were given the status of French citizens.

Perhaps the most important date for St. Louis and for West Africa was 1854, when General Faidherbe was appointed Governor. Today his mark is still firmly on St. Louis. The ordered layout of the city and its streets were his work. The large bridge connecting the island on which St. Louis stands to the mainland is named after him. The city's most important and famous school is the Lycée Faidherbe. And even now one can listen to old folk sitting on the benches of the park, in which his statue stands, telling tales of the great General, who had fought against the famous Toucouleur chief, El Hadj Omar and brought Senegal, Soudan and Mauretania into the French orbit. Perhaps some of these old people are his own descendants, for he is reputed to have been a prolific father.

By 1878 St. Louis had grown to a city of 16,000 inhabitants, and despite the rapid expansion of Dakar and Rufisque farther down the Coast, there was little to worry about the future.

7:Crowder J-5 (1955-1958) 1959
MS37 Senegal MS37
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their homosexuality, is the character of the Jollof women. They are Africa's most beautiful women: they must also be the most demanding. Few people have much good to say for these elegant *femmes fatales*. They are lazy, selfish and fickle. They dislike housework and many of them stick with their husbands only as long as they are prepared to pay out vast sums for their clothes and jewellery. Since the elegant woman (and every Jollof girl aspires to be that) costs about £100 a year to keep in clothes and jewellery, it is little wonder that Jollof men are seeking wives from other tribes, where competence within the house rather than elegance is the standard by which a woman is judged.

Such is Jollof preoccupation with fashion that there is a fashion house in Dakar with Jollof mannequins. These women are chosen not only for their beauty but for their position in society. For if they come from a good family they are sure to be noticed by other Jollof women in the streets, and immediately the clothes they are wearing will be remarked on, and to Pierre Grosse's shop the fashion-crazy Jollofs will rush.

The Jollof dress originates from St. Louis, when the French re-occupied it after the Napoleonic wars. At that time fashionable ladies were wearing the Empire style with its high waistline and long, flowing dresses. Since then the Jollofs have made this style their national dress. They have the same high waistline, the long dresses, sometimes modified by a bodice, and great candy-floss turbans. To show off their magnificent shoulders they have enlarged the neckline, and puffed up the sleeves, stiffened with starch, to half-moon shapes that stand out crisply from the body. The sleeve is usually dropped off one shoulder to reveal the full beauty of its owner.

Over the dress a great docket or cloak of muslin, tulle or organdie is thrown, usually in a colour contrasting with the dress. Materials are chosen with great care. One has only to see these women in Pierre Grosse's handling great lengths of cloth with expert and tender attention to know that no cheap cotton print can be palmed off on the most discriminating buyers on the West African market.

The Jollof's ensemble is not complete without wig, jewellery and make-up. Wigs are of several designs. The most typical, though not the most frequently seen, are two stiff plaits of horse-